SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM J. PERRY
CLOSING REMARKS AT MUNICH CONFERENCE ON SECURITY
MUNICH, GERMANY
FEBRUARY 6, 1994

Secretary Perry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a daunting task to explain the three hours of comment on a thirty-minute talk. It is not feasible for me in any event, and it would tire your patience before lunch to try to answer every commentator. I will attempt, however, to cover each of the issues that has been raised to the best of my ability.

First, on Ukrainian nuclear weapons: I do not agree that the Ukrainian nuclear weapons are relatively harmless because the Ukrainian Government does not have the codes for them. Now, I believe, it is a relatively straightforward matter for a government that has the skilled technical people that exist in Ukraine to solve that problem. So I reject the idea that Ukrainian nuclear weapons are harmless.

On the question of security assurances versus security guarantees: The Ukrainian Government has made the judgement -- I'm trying to explain what the security concept as seen by the Ukrainian Government is -- they made the judgement that their security will be improved by signing this trilateral agreement. It will be improved by getting rid of their nuclear weapons rather than by saving them. And it will be improved by joining Partnership for Peace.

The trilateral agreement: First, I will comment from the Ukrainian Government point of view. There is no such thing as absolute security. But, more specifically, the trilateral agreement did not include a guarantee of Ukrainian security by the United States. That is, it did not have the kind of agreement that we have in NATO that we would come to defend Ukraine if it is attacked. The United States Government is not prepared to make that sort of a guarantee to the Ukrainian Government.

The second point of comment is on Dr. Teller's very important intervention refering to the "lump of gold" research and development capabilities. I would like to associate myself strongly with Dr. Teller's comment (and) make a few specific points about that.

First of all, while the budget, the defense budget, of the United States has decreased since the peak in 1986 and is now down to a level that it was in the late 1970s or the 1980 period. Notwithstanding that fact, because of a judgement made by now two administrations -- both the Bush Administration and

the Clinton Administration, which have presided over this decline in budget -- that the R&D portion of that budget, I don't have the exact number in my head, is about 50 percent higher than it was during the late 70s.

So while the defense budget today is approximately equal to the defense budget in the late 70s, the R&D portion of that budget is substantially higher. The number is approximately 50 percent higher. However, even with that level of funding, the utility of that depends on good management of the program and it also depends on increased access to the commercial research and development work that is underway in the United States and other western countries. And that is not as easy to achieve as you might imagine given the way we develop and procure our military systems. Improving that access is a commitment which I have made to our Congress and I intend to follow that out.

It also is related to the point raised by one of the commentators about cooperating in research and development within NATO. I have also promised that there would be a renaissance among the NATO nations in the cooperation in the development and in the production of military systems.

There was a specific question raised about the ... in fact a specific recommendation made that United States take action to curtail this sale of conventional arms in Russia. And the commentator rightly observed that, if we were to take that position, we might also be prepared to stop the sale of conventional arms in the United States, in France, in Germany, in the United Kingdom, and indeed, in all the NATO countries. However laudible this objective is, I do not know of any way of achieving it. Even if we could achieve it, I do not know what to do about the fact that the Chinese, Israelis, the Swedes, the Swiss, all have very substantial arms capabilities and are all very active in the world market of arms. I have undertaken myself a more modest objective, but still a very important objective, which is to do everything we can to curtail the development of weapons of mass destruction -- nuclear, chemical, biological -- and that objective is hard enough to achieve, but we've got a shot at doing that.

There have been several very important points raised about the Partnership for Peace. One specific question raised was whether we have the prompt implementation of the Partnership for Peace underway. I do not want to prematurely come to judgements on it, but I will tell you that all of the early signals are positive. There's already a preparation at Mons of the facilities for the new partners. In the United States, there are detailed plans underway and agreements already underway for joint exercises, and I have heard reports from other defense ministers that similar activity and planning is underway in their own countries.

A related question had to do with Combined Joint Task Forces. The question here was whether, in this strictly European Task

Force, they would be able to function properly without some of the specialized resources of the United States military. And, if indeed these specialized resources were necessary, would they be forthcoming, given the view of the United States Congress towards the support of these sort of operations. I cannot answer that question. I can't forecast the future in complete detail on that. I would point out to you that in Bosnia today, where there is an essentially European peacekeeping force on the ground that does not involve U.S. troops, that we are supporting them with intelligence, we're supporting them with airlift, and we're supporting them with the close air support and the Deny Flight operation. So there is some precedenct, at least, for saying that the answer to that question will be yes.

On the more fundamental question on the Partnership for Peace: The question was raised as to, first of all, whether this was a Russia-centered policy and whether because of that it was philosophically flawed? And part of that discussion alleged that Russia is destined to be an imperial power and will not therefore be able to seize the opportunity to become a democratic nation. I will give you my personal view on that, which is that I reject the view that the culture of a nation predestines its behavior or performance in the political arena. That somehow there is something about the culture of Russia that prevents it from becoming a democratic nation. I reject that. I think that is false. We have at least one recent and very prominent example in history. It was not too many years ago that many people were saying that the German culture would prevent it from becoming democratic and those people were proven to be considerably in error. I say, and I say in the paper, that whatever Russia's culture is, Russia at this stage in history has a choice and I argue that the proper role for the United States, the proper role for the NATO nations, is to do everything that we can to help them make the right choice. Ultimately, though, it is their choice. And the second responsibility of NATO is to provide a hedge if they fail to make the right choice.

There were also points made about the Partnership for Peace which stated, fundamentally, that this was a major missed opportunity. The opportunity being, of course, the opportunity for immediate expansion of NATO taking on other members at this time. The Visograd countries were mentioned, the Baltics have been mentioned. Ukraine was also suggested. Their interested in membership. The list becomes large if you start adding it up. Some are more nearly ready than others to be sure.

And it was further argued that the reason we were not doing this is because, as I said before, is that our policy was too Russia-centered, rather than being European-centered. I have argued, and I continue to argue, that the assistance that we and other nations have given to Russia to help reform is a postivie, definite, concrete step that we can take. That's not Russia-centered, that is self-interest of the United States,

self-interest of Europe. And second, that it was in response to the point that the NATO expansion would be a safety net if that failed. My view on that is that the Partnership for Peace is the safety net. On balance, all things considered, I would rather bet that the Partnership for Peace is a more effective safety net and effectively that is what NATO decided at their summit meeting. My message to you today and to NATO today is that, having decided that, let's get on with it and make it effective.

In the discussion of why at this stage we did not recommend expanding NATO and, again, in the argument that this was a Russia-centered policy, it was pointed out that this is one of a series of decisions that were Russia-centered. The first one being the arguments against the double track on missiles -- tactial missiles in Europe -- the arguments against the deployment of missiles in Europe, and the arguments against the reunification of Germany. All I can say to that is that I was one of the people who strongly supported all three of those actions, but I still believe, at this stage, that the expansion of NATO at this time is not appropriate and that the more effective action the Partnership for Peace.

I might say that not only did I support the double track missile (decision), but I was the one who proposed it to NATO. Not in '77 by the commentator, but it was the winter of '79 at the NATO meeting of the defense ministers in The Hague. So I reject the lumping these ideas together as having anything to do with each other.

Let me get on to the question with which I opened my talk with and which is generating much talk and emotion at this stage, which is actions in Bosnia. The most eloquent appeal for immediate action in Bosnia was made by Richard Perle. I believe, and I will concede freely that that was an eloquent and moving statment. Let me refute part of that statement. Starting off by absolutely, categorically rejecting the allegation that NATO and the United States are inactive, and take no actions in this today.

We have very substantial actions underway. First of all, to limit the violence in that country, we have very strong and effective action, NATO action, called Deny Flight which is keeping the addition of tactial air to the carnage already happening in that country and therefore in a very important way, limiting the violence. And the United States and many other NATO nations are participating in that. We have 28,000 peacekeeping forces on the ground, not including the United States, but including many of the NATO nations here today and that's playing an important role in limited the violence. We also are involved in limiting the spread of violence. For example, the United States, the Nordic nations and other NATO nations have peacekeeping forces in Macedonia where the specific objective is keeping the conflict from spreading into that country. We have massive action underway in providing

humanitarian aid, in supplying food and medicine to people in Bosnia. The United States and other NATO nations are conducting an airlift, an airdrop operation, today which is comparable in scope to the Berlin Airlift of an earlier era. And we are working to bring the warring factions to a peace agreement. So this is real action. It involves tens of thousands of military forces of NATO, and it involves the expenditure of billions of dollars a year. Arguably, it saved the lives of tens if not hundreds of thousands Bosnians to this point. It is not, however, succeeded in ending the tragedy there, and it has led many critics to argue that NATO is ineffective.

As the peace discussions in Geneva drone on with no end in sight, let me explore the alternative, the additional actions, we might take. Since I share the frustration of many of you that whatever we're doing and however much action it is, it has not had the desired effect yet.

I'll start off by saying what we do not propose to do. And that is, we will not attempt to impose on the warring factions a peace agreement by military force, and then subsequently try to maintain that peace agreement with military force. I can stately flatly and unequivocally to you that there is no public support and therefore no Congressional support in the United States for that action. And I believe on the basis of my discussion with defense ministers and foreign ministers of other NATO countries that there is very little support in other NATO countries as well. So we can make grand statements. We can cry out about the morality of the situation. But I can assure you that there is no public support for that action and we are, let us not forget, democracies.

It has been suggested that we could lift the embargo in Bosnia. That is a fair question. I think the criteria on which that proposal should be judged is the extent to which lifting the embargo would limit the violence or the extent to which you would move us closer to a peace agreement. We have believed, to this point, that the answer to this question is no. That is, it would not have those effects. Nevertheless, that option is still open and we have not closed the door on that as a move which we might feel compeled to take. We, in this case, being the United Nations with the United States support.

Another proposal has been made that has to do with air strikes. I would agree that in 1991, a strong argument could have been made for the use of air strikes, the threat and the use of air strikes as a deterent to what has developed in Bosnia. That time has passed. Now any consideration of air strikes has to take into account that there are 28,000 peacekeepers on the ground, lightly armed, not prepared to fight a war, and surrounded by 200,000 combatants that are armed and are prepared to fight a war.

On the subject of air strikes, let me be very clear. We, we the states being NATO, have the capability to deploy air strikes. Not only that, it is deployed and in a high state of readiness. Within one hour after being given the direction to begin air strikes, we could begin. The question is not whether we are capable of doing them or what the results would be. What the political results would be effected by the air strikes and if the air strike are act one of a new melodrama. What does that do and what does that breed and what is the conclusion of that melodrama? These are the questions that are being seriously considered as we speak. The consideration is what will the political effect be, not can we bomb some facilities and destroy some facilities and kill some people. There is no doubt of our capability of doing that. What will the political results be? Will they have the desired effect or not? I can tell you, unequivocally, at this stage, that we will not take any military action including air strikes without considering seriously the answers to those questions and we will not envoke air strikes unilaterally. Not with 28,000 troops of our allies on the ground in Bosnia. Whatever else we do, ending the bloodshed in Bosnia will require the warring factions to come to a peace agreement.

One of the discussants argued that the United States should take a much more proactive role in participation with those peace agreements, indeed, accelerating them to a rapid conclusion. I believe that is a very sensible proposal. It was also argued that we should impose a arms control regime in Yugoslavia. I think that's also a sensible proposal. I do not see that in isolation to a peace agreement, though. I think any arms control regime in Yugoslavia is logically a part of a peace agreement and not a predecessor to it.

Mr. Chairman, that summerizes my comments on my talk.

(End of transcription)